

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MC-02 AID-05

EB-07 IGA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 /074 W

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R 131348Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5131

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUWAIT 1816

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KU

SUBJ: STATUS OF GOK CONSIDERATION OF US ARMS PURCHASES

REFS: A) KUWAIT 0846, B) KUWAIT 0622

SUMMARY: THE EMBASSY ATTEMPTS TO HIGHLIGHT RECENT MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS AND PROBLEMS WITH RESPECT TO KUWAIT'S ARMS PURCHASES FROM THE UNITED STATES. WE REMAIN CONCERNED THAT ADEQUATE PROGRESS WILL NOT BE MADE IN OBTAINING NECESSARY GOK DECISIONS AND FUNDS. MEANWHILE THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT WE ARE WITNESSING THE BEGINNING OF A CHANGE IN KUWAITI DEFENSE LEADERSHIP AND/OR REDUCED GOK DEFENSE PROCUREMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE EMBASSY REMAINS VERY CONCERNED REGARDING THE FAILURE OF GOK AUTHORITIES TO FOCUS ON AND MAKE NECESSARY DECISIONS CONCERNING ONGOING FMS GORGRAMS. WHILE WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS, WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT DESIRED PROGRESS WILL BE ACHIEVED. THERE IS SUMMARIZED BELOW FOR THE INFORMATION OF INTERESTED US AGENCIES THE STATUS OF MAJOR OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS. THE BASIS FOR MUCH INFORMATION WAS LONG MEETING APRIL 11 BETWEEN DOD REP, COLONEL COX, AND CHIEF OF
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KUWAIT ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF, GENERAL MUBARAK, AND LONG

MEETINGS ON APR 10 AND 12 WITH OTHER KEY STAFF OFFICERS. MORE DETAILED REPORTS OF SPECIFIC SUBJECTS TREATED ARE BEING SENT BY SEPTELS TO RESPONSIBLE MILITARY COMMANDS.

2. GENERAL MUBARAK INDICATES THAT DEFENSE MINISTER SHAIKH SA'AD AND KAF HAVE ACCEPTED WITH RESIGNATION US EXPLANATIONS IN RESPONSE TO LIST OF PROBLEMS SUPPLIED TO DEPUCEINCEUR GENERAL HUYSER DURING JANUARY VISIT TO KUWAIT. GOK ALSO DISAPPOINTED BY USG DECISION NOT TO ASSIST UNDER FMS WITH TECHNICAL TRAINING SCHOOL AND SUPPLY OF PATROL CRAFT EQUIPPED WITH HARPOON. HOWEVER, GOK RELIEVED THAT "AIR CLEARED" AND IT NOW CAN PROCEED TO SEEK ALTERNATIVE SUPPLIERS. GENERAL (WHO CURRENTLY HAS ON DISPLAY IN HIS OFFICE MODEL OF SOVIET ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER AND Z54-23 ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN) URGED USG TO SUPPLY AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME LOA FOR ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS. NO SPECIFIC MENTION WAS MADE OF REQUESTED LOA FOR 155 MM ARTILLERY PURCHASE. DESPITE USG DECISION NOT TO ASSIST KUWAIT WITH HARPOON FOR FAST PATROL CRAFT, GENERAL CONFIRMED KUWAITI DESIRE (FORWARDED THROUGH GOK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON) TO OBTAIN "NAVAL" TRAINING FOR APPROXIMATELY 200 CADETS AND ENLISTED MEN FOR FLEDGLING NAVY.

3. EFFORTS TO DRAW KUWAITI OFFICIALS OUT ON MONEY PROBLEMS HAVE MET WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. GENERAL MUBARAK CONFIRMED INFO OBTAINED FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT GOK PROBABLY WILL NOT ASK NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO PASS ON SUPPLEMENTARY ARMS PURCHASE APPROPRIATION (REF A) UNTIL JUNE. DECISION APPEARS TO BE TACTICAL ONE. ALL MAJOR MONEY BILLS (INCLUDING \$3 BILLION HOUSING PROGRAM) WILL BE HELD UNTIL FINAL DAYS OF CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION WHEN DEPUTIES WILL BE MORE INCLINED TO APPROVE THEN DEBATE REQUESTS MADE BY GOVERNMENT. MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS SEEM WILLING TO ACCEPT THE SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL COSTS INVOLVED AND DELAYED PROGRAMS RATHER THAN RISK PROLONGED ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET REQUEST. (RECENT ACROMONIUS DEBATE ON KUWAIT AIRWAYS BUDGET MAY HAVE INFLUENCED THIS DECISION ON TACTICS/ TIMING.)

4. REPEATED EFFORTS TO DRAW OUT MUBARAK AND OTHERS ON GOK ACCEPTANCE OF LOA'S FOR USLOK HAVE BEEN DISMISSED WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT THE MATTER IS UNDER STUDY. MEANWHILE, GOK CONFIDENTIAL

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OFFICIALS ARE LOOKING FORWARD ANXIOUSLY TO THE ARRIVAL OF USG PERSONNEL CONTRACTED FOR UNDER A-4 AND IHAWK FMS CASES. WE ARE BECOMING LESS OPTIMISTIC OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING GOK AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT USLOK (AS ENVISAGED BY DOD), DESPITE GENERAL MUBARAK'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO GENERAL HUYSER AND SHAIKH SA'AD'S ASSURANCES TO FORMER AMBASSADOR STOLZFUS ON THE SUBJECT. KUWAITIS OBVIOUSLY ARE CONCERNED WITH THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BREAKING TRADITION BY ALLOWING A FOREIGN MILITARY

GROUP TO OPERATE IN KUWAIT NOT UNDER SUBSTANTIAL KUWAITI CONTROL.
EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS THIS MATTER. HOWEVER, ARMED
FORCES/MINISTRY ARE NOT INTERESTED IN ADDRESSING IT AT THIS
TIME.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KUWAIT 1816

5. IT NOW APPEARS CERTAIN THAT GOK WILL STRONGLY OPPOSE INCORPORATION INTO THE IHAWK PROGRAM OF THE ELABORATE HOUSING AND SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS REQUESTED BY MICOM/RAYTHEON. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE MOD INTENDS TO OFFER "ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS" COMPARABLE TO THOSE PROVIDED TO OTHER FOREIGN TECHNICAL ADVISORY AND ASSISTANCE GROUPS (SUCH AS UN AND US HWY ADMIN). WITH RESPECT TO THE SAME PROGRAM, MUBARAK STATES THAT IHAWK LOCAL CONSTRUCTION WILL RPT WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE GOK RATHER THAN THE US CORPS OF ENGINEERS. WHILE MILITARY WOULD PREFER COE, IT IS A POTENTIAL POLITICAL ISSUE IN KUWAIT, LOCAL TALENT IS AVAILABLE AND THE USG SHOULD DISABUSE ITSELF OF THE NOTION THAT COE SUPERVISION IS MANDATORY, ACCORDING TO MUBARAK.

6. GOK IS STILL "STUDYING" OPTIONS OFFERED BY THE US FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER AND COMMAND & CONTROL SYSTEM. MEANWHILE, REPRESENTATIVES OF HUGHES, LOCKHEED AND LITTEN HAVE LEARNED THAT THE PROJECT MAY AGAIN BE OPENED TO COMMERCIAL SUPPLIERS. (OUR READING OF PROPOSED CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION SUGGESTS MATTER MAY SOON BE BACK IN FMS CHANNELS.) COMPANIES CURRENTLY HAVE REPRESENTATIVES IN KUWAIT SEEKING

APPOINTMENTS WITH APPROPRIATE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS.

7. ONLY OTHER MAJOR US COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SECURITY
AREA IN STATE OF MOTION IS LONG-STANDING LOCKHEED \$50 MILLION
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OFFER TO KUWAIT'S MINISTRY OF INTERIOR TO PROVIDE POLICE TRAINING,
COMPUTER-BASED IMMIGRATION CONTROLS AND ELECTRONIC PROTECTIVE
SURVEILLANCE OF KEY INSTALLATIONS. COMPANY HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO
FORCE A DECISION AND SHAIKH SA'AD HAS PROMISED DEFINITIVE ANSWER BY
THE END OF THE CURRENT MONTH.

8. OF A MORE GENERAL NATURE THE DEPARTMENT WILL WANT TO KNOW
THAT THERE IS GROWING SPECULATION IN LOCAL DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES THAT
KUWAIT'S ARMS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM MAY HAVE MORE THAN MONEY
PROBLEMS. THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE SEEMS TO HAVE GROWN DIS-
INTERESTED IN THE SUBJECT AND HAS COME UNDER INCREASING CRITICISM
FROM HIS COLLEAGUES FOR COST OVERRUNS AND POOR PER-
FORMANCE. SURPRISINGLY, EVEN MOD OFFICIALS WHO NORMALLY HOLD
THE MINISTER IN GREAT RESPECT, HAVE BECOME SOMEWHAT CRITICAL,
AT THE SAME TIME SHOWING MORE DEFERENCE TO GENERAL MUBARAK
WHO FORMERLY WAS HELD IN LOW REGARD (RATHER OPENLY) BY MANY
MOD OFFICIALS. THE FAILURE OF SA'AD TO EXERCISE EVEN MINIMAL
LEADERSHIP HAS CAUSED SPECULATION THAT WE MAY BE WITNESSING THE
BEGINNING OF CHANGE IN KUWAITI DEFENSE LEADERSHIP AND/OR GOK
DEFENSE PROCUREMENT POLICIES. (BRITISH AND FRENCH AMBASSADORS
ARE OF THE OPINION THAT THE GOK WILL CUT BACK SHARPLY ON DEFENSE
PURCHASES, POSSIBLY ELIMINATING ENTIRELY THE FORMATION OF A NAVY.)

9. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY REALIZES THIS CABLE RAISES MANY
MORE QUESTIONS THAN IT ANSWERS. HOWEVER, WE FELT A GENERAL
SUMMARY WAS TIMELY AND USEFUL. WE WILL ENDEAVOR TO PROVIDE
DETAIL AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS TIME PERMITS.
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